

Rock Creek Elementary Walk Audit Report

October 2020



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How to Use this Report

This walk audit report is intended to guide infrastructure improvements near Rock Creek Elementary with the goals of improving safety for pedestrians and people on bicycles, as well as enabling more students to choose active methods of travel to school. Safe Routes to School programs not only benefit students, but also the broader community by slowing traffic in neighborhoods and providing opportunities for physical activity and improved health outcomes. The recommendations in this report are informed and influenced from the Safe Routes to School Technical Advisory Committee consisting of Placer County Public Works Engineering, Placer County Transportation Planning Agency, the City of Auburn Transit, Placer County Public Health, Auburn Union School District, Auburn Police Department, the California Highway Patrol, Placer Independent Resource Services, and the Placer County Sheriff's Office.

Background and School Location

The Safe Routes to School program conducted a walkability and bikeability assessment along routes to Rock Creek Elementary to identify opportunities and needs for infrastructure improvements (e.g. assess presence and quality of sidewalks and low-stress bicycle facilities, assess safety of crossings, and evaluate ability to take routes with low traffic). Community members, elected officials, key stakeholders, and parents were invited to assess the school's landscape and identify barriers and opportunities to walking in order to brainstorm solutions to improve walkability around the school.

The facilitated walk is meant for interdisciplinary groups of community stakeholders with the following objectives in mind:

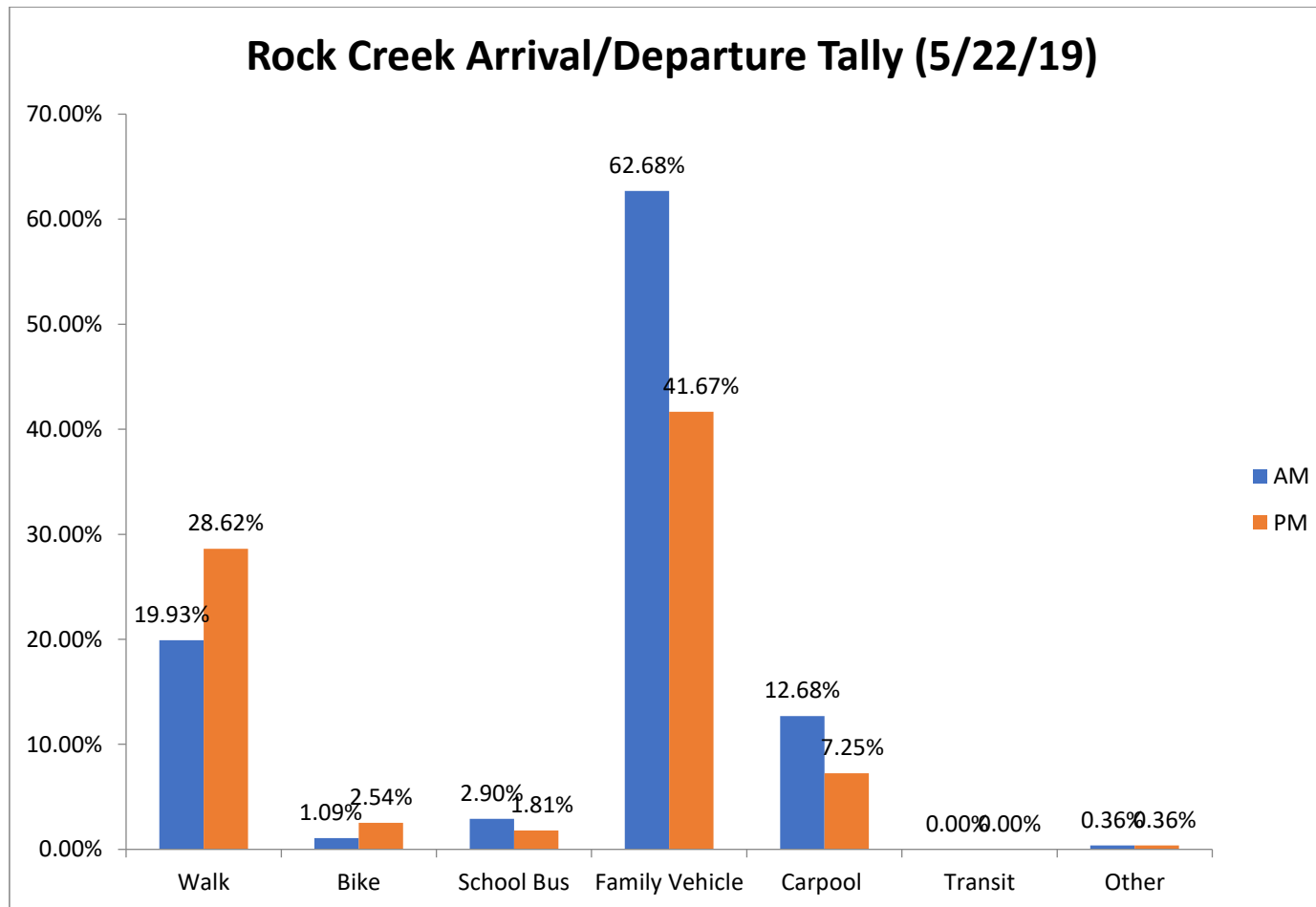
- Provide an experiential hands-on exercise to evaluate the walking environment.
- Identify pedestrian and bicyclist issues such as safety, access, connectivity, comfort, and convenience.
- Identify potential alternatives or solutions such as engineering treatments, policy changes, or education and enforcement measures.

Rock Creek Elementary School is located in Auburn, CA. The school is near Highway 49 which is a high density thoroughway to get to businesses. Rock Creek Elementary has 293 students and 94% are eligible for free and reduced lunch programs.

Existing Conditions

Mode Split

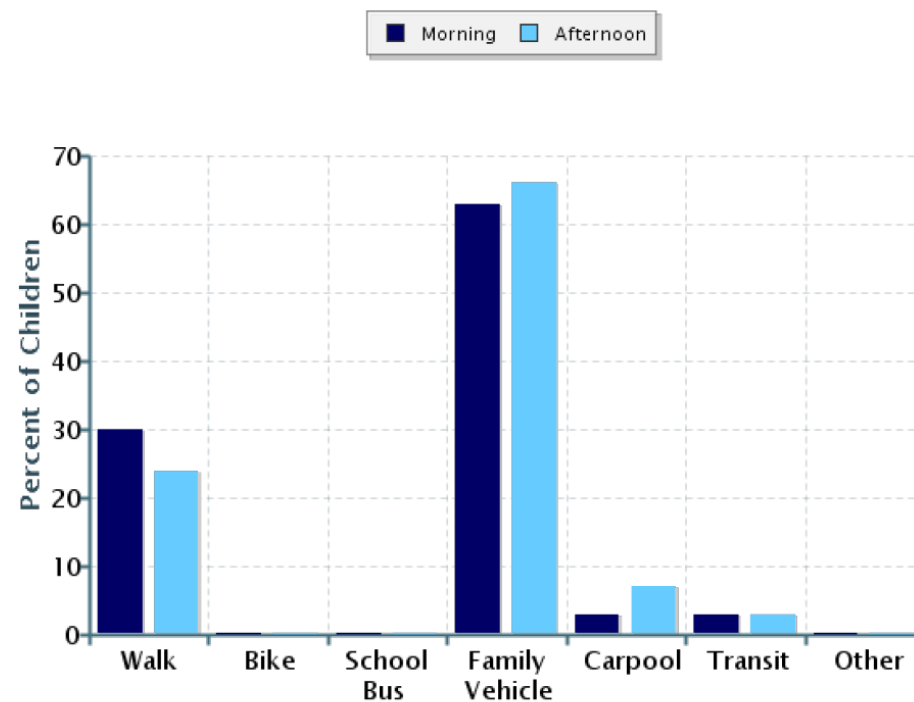
Using the National Center for Safe Routes to School Student Travel Tally, in class tallies of student travel were conducted over a period of 2 days in May 2019. Children were polled by teachers to determine which mode of transportation they used to arrive and depart to and from school.



Parent Surveys

Placer County Public Health coordinated with Rock Creek Elementary to gather baseline data on attitudes about existing levels of walking and bicycling to school by distributing parent surveys. The survey asks for information about what factors affect whether parents allow their children to walk or bike to school, the presence of key safety-related conditions along routes to school, and related background information. The survey results help determine how to improve opportunities for children to walk or bike to school and measure parental attitude changes. Thirty-one parents completed the parent survey about walking and biking to school.

Typical mode of arrival at and departure from school



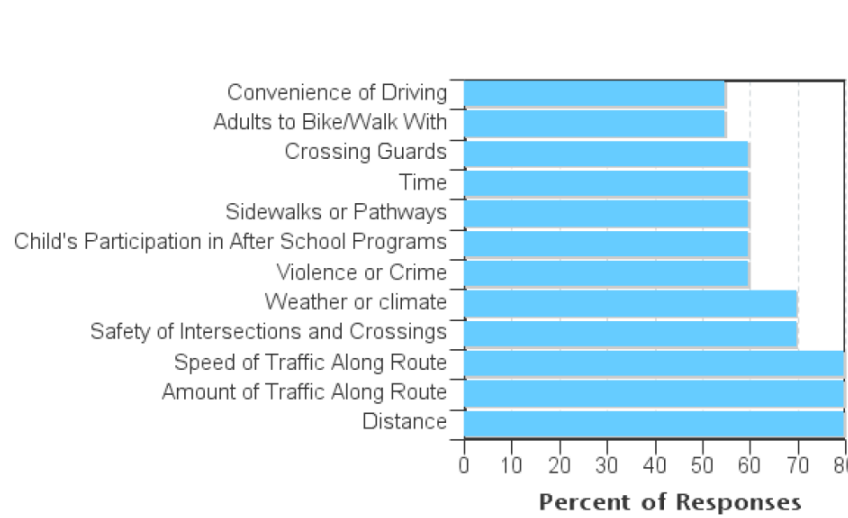
Percent of children who have asked for permission to walk or bike to/from school by distance
they live from school

Asked Permission?	Number of Children	Less than 1/4 mile	1/4 mile up to 1/2 mile	1/2 mile up to 1 mile	1 mile up to 2 miles	More than 2 miles
Yes	8	57%	29%	33%	50%	0%
No	19	43%	71%	67%	50%	100%

Don't know or No response: 3

Numbers rather than percents are displayed because the number of respondents for this question was less than 30.

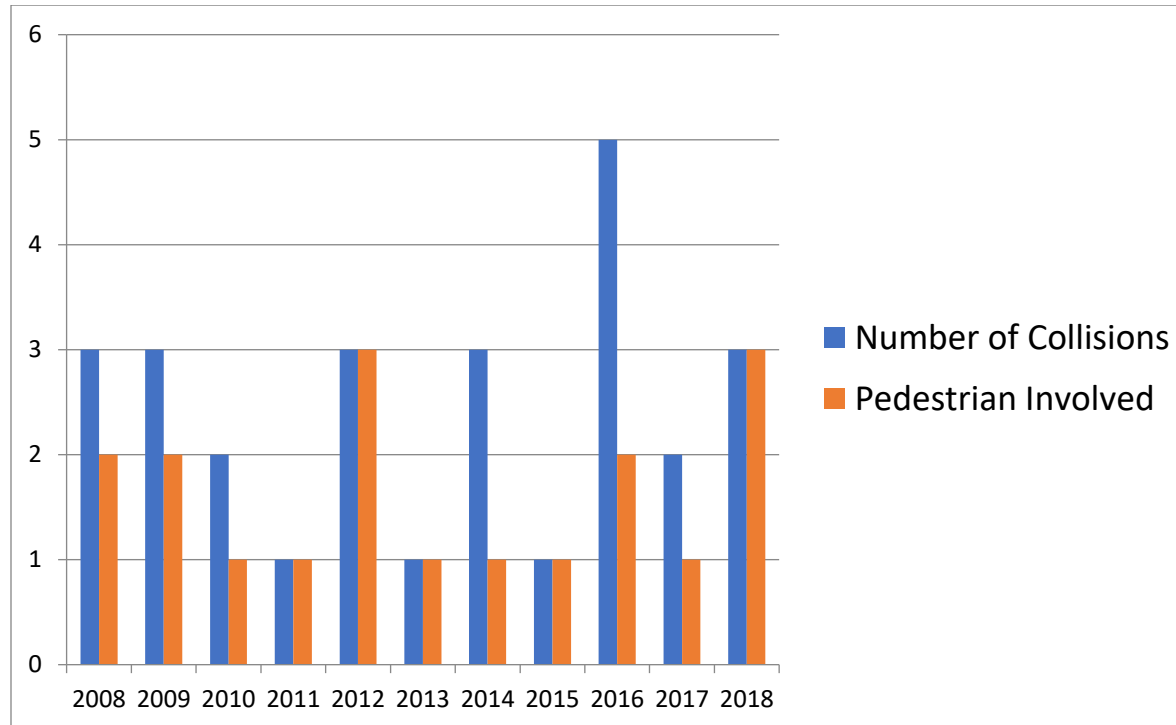
Issues reported to affect the decision to not allow a child to walk or bike to/from school by
parents of children who do not walk or bike to/from school



Traffic Injury Mapping – Collision Data

Between 2008 and 2018, there were 27 collisions reported within ½ mile of Rock Creek Elementary with 67% involving pedestrians and 33% involving bicyclists.

Collisions Per Year Within ½ Mile of **Rock Creek Elementary**, 2008-2018



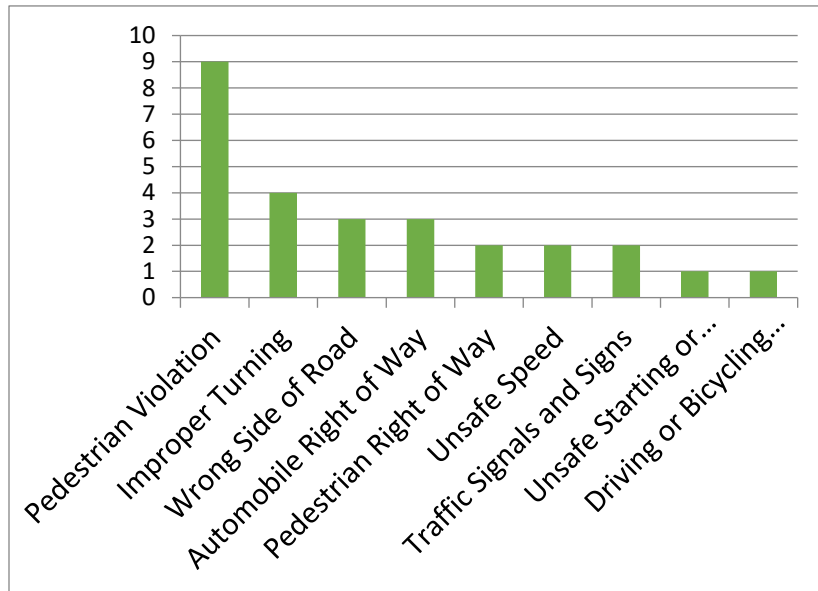
Total number of collisions: 27

Percent of total collisions involving pedestrians: $18/27 = 67\%$

Percent of total collisions involving bicyclists: $9/27 = 33\%$

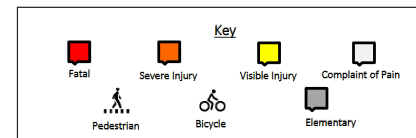
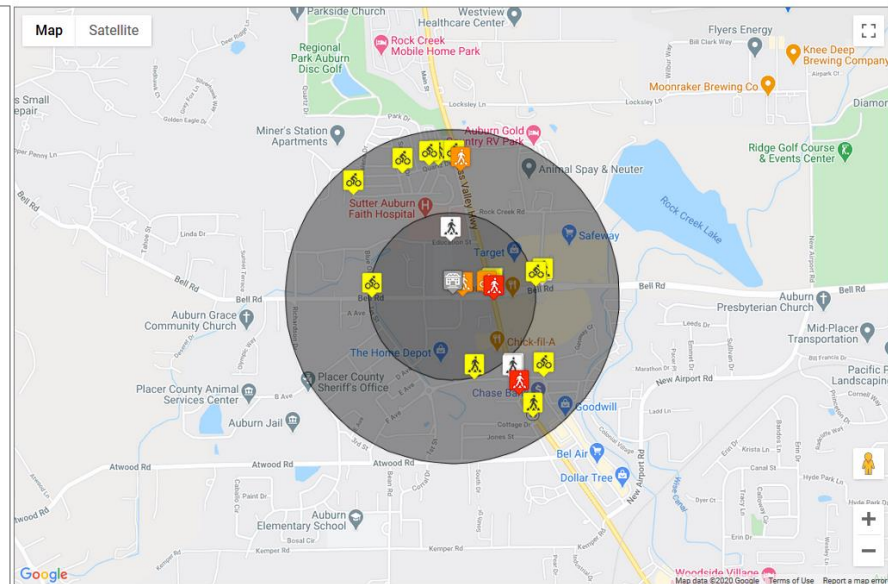
Total number of fatalities: 2, both pedestrians

Primary Collision Factor Violation, Rock Creek Elementary, 2008-2018



Bike and Pedestrian Collisions w/i ½ mi of Rock Creek Elementary, 2008-2018

3050 Bell Road | Auburn | Placer County | CDS: 31667876031058

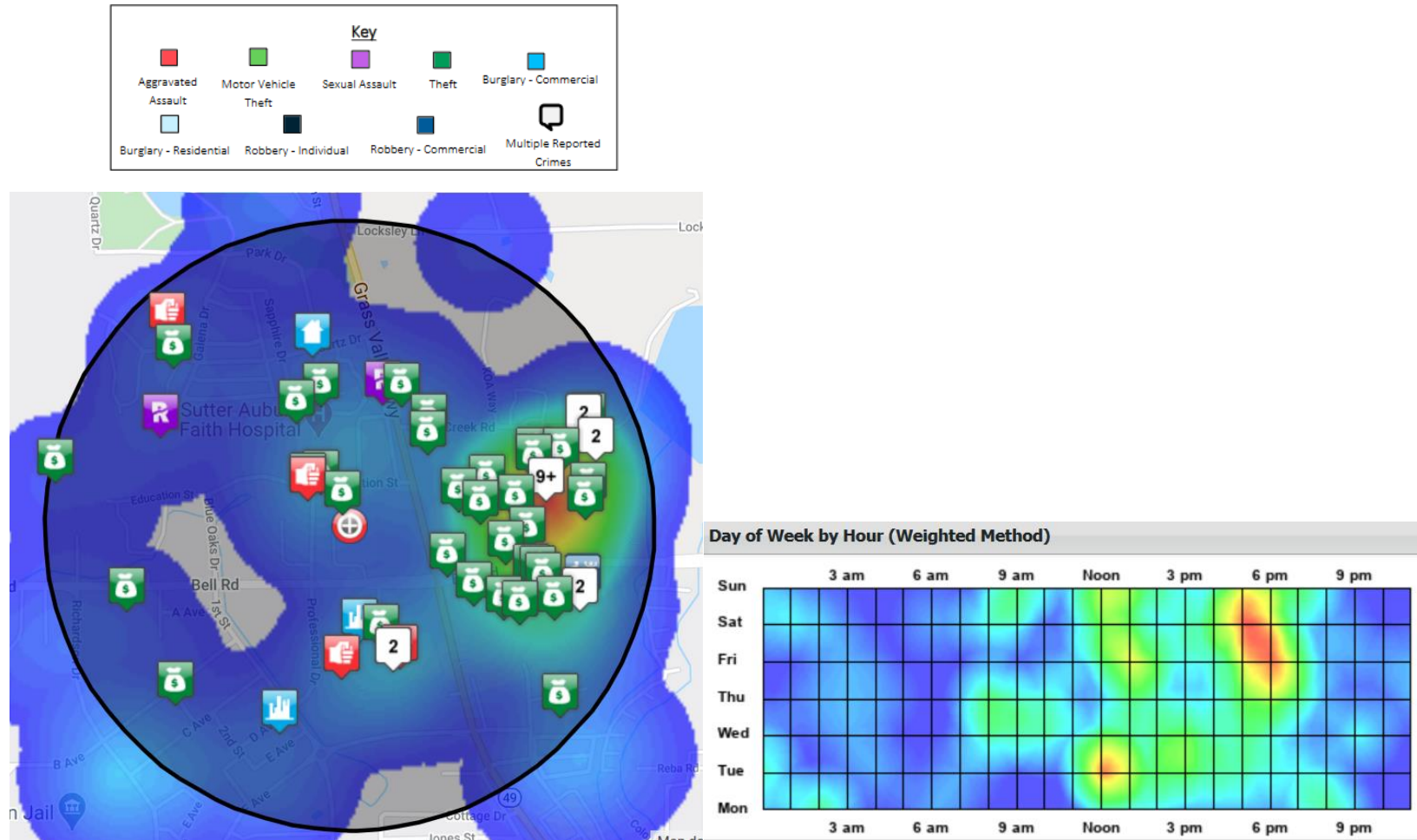


School Concerns

- Some parents park on the street or the privately owned dirt lot on Professional Dr to walk students to school going down a steep narrow dirt path.
- The drop off lane can back up on Bell Rd and spill to Highway 49 when it is really congested.
- Education St is a highly trafficked street due to the close proximity to Sutter Auburn Faith hospital, county buildings, and other businesses. The majority of the students that walk come from the Greens in Auburn and must cross Educations St to get to school.

Crime Reports

Between August 2019-February 2020, there were 118 crimes reported with ½ mile radius of Rock Creek Elementary, most of which were classified as theft.

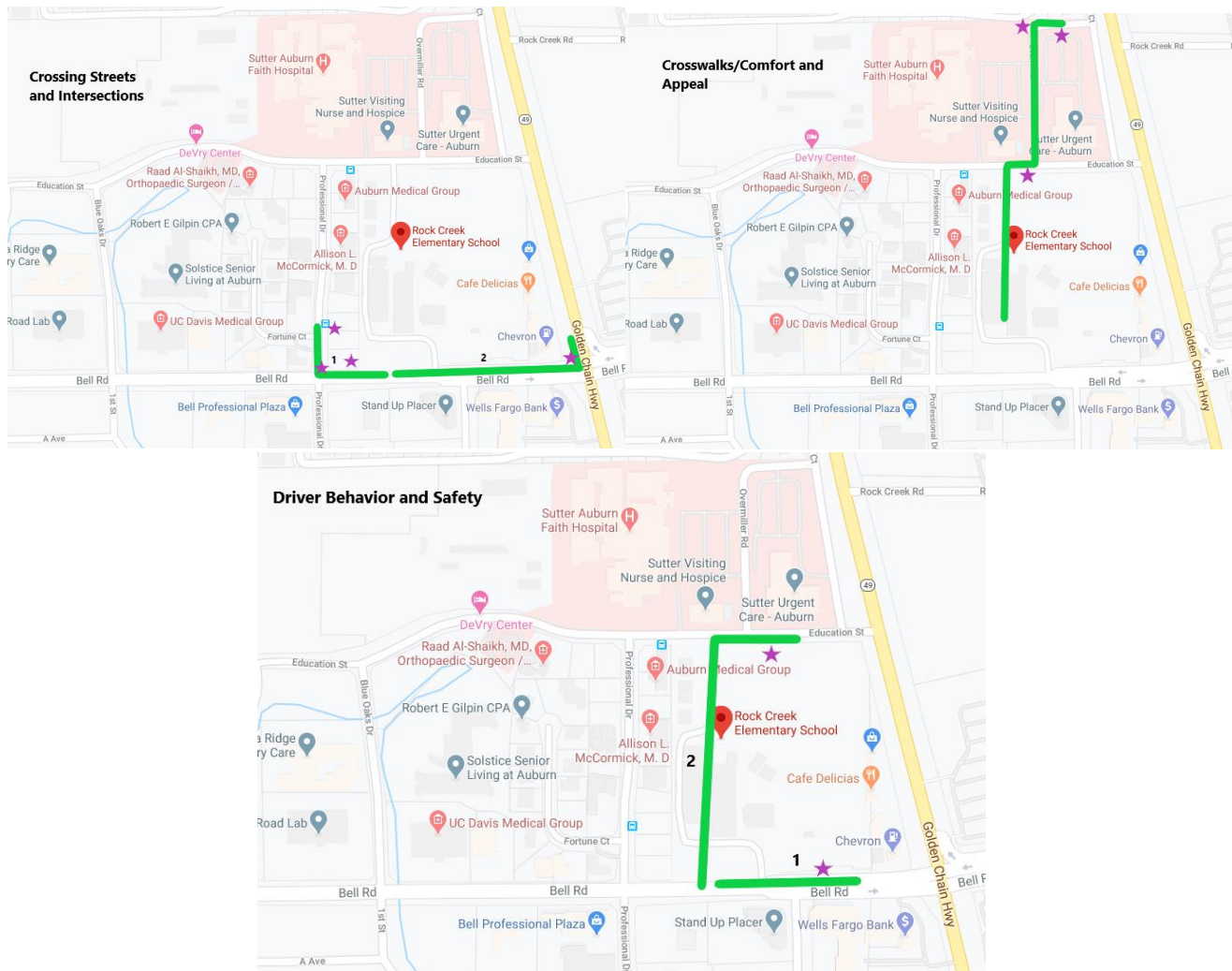


Community Crime Map

Crime occurrence by time of day between Aug 2019 – Feb 2020

Walk Audit

A Walk Audit was conducted at Rock Creek Elementary on February 27th, 2020. Participants included a Placer County Supervisor, Auburn Union School District, Placer County Public Works, Placer County Sheriff's Office, Placer County Public Health, the California Highway Patrol, a parent and a student. The routes are annotated on the maps below in green with the purple stars highlighting areas to focus participant's attention.



Assessments

Participants were divided into 3 groups to cover different assessments with focus areas from the AARP Audit Tool Kit. The assessments included Crossing Streets & Intersections/Comfort, Sidewalks & Comfort, and Driver Behavior & Safety.

Areas of Concern

Participants convened after the walk to discuss the three biggest areas of concern relating to the specific focus area group they were in.

Sidewalks

1. The area of asphalt that is used as a sidewalk on Education St is too narrow, slopes, and the “sidewalk” breaks off.
2. The steps to and from The Auburn Greens Condominiums is in poor condition. There are nails sticking out of the railings, no ramp for the use of strollers or bikes, and the sidewalks have cracks.
3. The crosswalk on Education Street is not very visible and has no lighted signs. Cars were seen going at high speeds in a school zone area and some cars stopped just short of the crosswalk while children were crossing. Only a small crosswalk sign was observed.

Crossing Streets and Intersections

1. There is an incomplete sidewalk on Professional Drive.
2. There is a dirt parking lot used by parents to park and walk down a hilly path to the school. The parking lot is privately owned.
3. The ramps need to be updated to be in compliance with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). The crosswalks could benefit from fresh paint.

Comfort and Appeal

1. There is a bus stop that has no bus shelter on Professional Drive.
2. There is a dirt patch on Professional Drive.
3. There is a lot of overgrowth on Bell Rd.

Driver Behavior and Safety

1. On Bell Rd and Highway 49 homeless people were observed. The area could also benefit from wider sidewalks.
2. Education Street lacks sidewalk signs, flashing beacons, and a speed bump to slow traffic.
3. The crosswalk could use new paint or flashing crosswalk signs.

Additional Observations

- Intersection ramps not ADA compliant (3 of 4 ramps missing); bus stop has no shelter or bench and needs more lighting; crosswalk at “entrance” faded and needs updating; “one way” signs faded at “entrance”; “no parking” sign fallen
- Section in front of Chevron gas station by signal is missing sidewalk
- Drivers not looking before turning right at pedestrian crossing
- Sidewalk on Professional Dr needs to be extended; no truncated domes on ramps crossing Bell at Professional; crosswalk across driveway needs refresh
- Suggestions: Add speed bumps on Education St and Professional on the west side above school crosswalk; repaint crosswalk at entrance of school on Bell Rd; make crosswalk sign larger on Education St; add flash crosswalks for the school
- Trash from homeless at Chevron gas station; too much traffic on Education St (consider speed bumps, rumble strips, signs on Education St for crosswalk)
- Suggestions: Additional signage for the crosswalk and speed bumps on Education St and Overmiller Rd
- Crossing guard was initially not present when children were crossing in the morning
- Limited parking available for parents that want to park and drop kids off; some parents parked on red curb which resulted in blocked view
- Entire families can’t walk together on sidewalk; sidewalk not big enough for strollers; families have to carry bikes/scooters/strollers up Auburn Greens stairs; children were observed walking on the side of the stairs in the dirt which gets slippery when it rains



Participants after the walk discussing the areas of concern they observed.



Education St sidewalk is narrow and has limited space for walking.



Student and parent participating in Walk Audit along Overmiller Rd.

Trash found by the stairway of The Auburn Greens.



The sidewalk on Education St is narrow, slopes, and breaks off.



Children walking west on Education St to the school gate.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Reduce vehicle speeds through increased enforcement on school routes and in school vicinities to improve safety for students.
- Where existing paths and trails connect residential areas and schools, improve paths as needed to ensure safe travel throughout the year.
- Assess traffic speeds, volumes, and vehicle types around schools; implement traffic calming measures in areas immediately around schools where indicated by speed and volume.
- Educate all drivers about the importance of safe driving and the safety needs of people walking, bicycling, and boarding and exiting transit through approaches such as advertising campaigns, educational trainings, driving or traffic school curricular components; encourage and incentivize local driving schools and employer based drivers' training to integrate these topics into curriculum.

Infrastructure Recommendations and Solutions

Low Cost Solutions

ID	Location	Recommendations	Justifications
1	Education St	Restripe crosswalk with advance stop bar	Restriping and updating the crosswalk with high visibility thermoplastic markings will improve pedestrian visibility and ensure the safety of students and families who use the crosswalk. Installing advance yield markings will increase visibility of pedestrians and create driver awareness of pedestrian crossings.
2	Education St	Install rectangular rapid flash beacon	Driving behavior such as speeding and failure to yield to pedestrians were concerns noted at the crosswalk. Installing a Rapid Flash Beacon would help improve safety and yield rates.
3	Education St crosswalk	Have crossing guard on duty earlier and open school campus gate earlier	Some students were observed crossing the street without parents before the school crossing guard arrived. An earlier start time would allow students to cross under direct supervision. Opening the school campus gate would allow the students to wait for school to start safely on school grounds rather than on the sidewalk near traffic.

4	Education St – school side of street	Paint curb red – no parking	Parents were observed parking on Education St to drop off students. By doing so, the cars blocked the view of the street and possibly the crosswalk. Painting the curb red would enforce no parking on the street to allow for greater visibility.
ID	Location	Recommendations	Justifications
5	Bell Rd	Address overgrowth and weeds	Attractive landscaping in conjunction with regular maintenance of overgrowth can discourage littering and improve the walking environment and areas around the school. Clearance of overgrowth would improve safety and visibility for those walking to and around the school.
6	Rock Creek Elementary drop off zone	Schedule staggered drop off times for students	Staggered drop off and pick up times would alleviate congestion on Bell Rd and disperse the traffic peak times at school.
7	Education St	Install raised speed table	At the location where the crosswalk exists, install a speed table in order to reduce the speed of traffic by raising the wheelbase of vehicles and improve the visibility of pedestrians in the crosswalk.

High Cost Solutions

ID	Location	Recommendations	Justifications
1	Overmiller Rd leading to The Auburn Greens	Replace or fix the stairway. Add a ramp	Nails and other unsafe objects were found protruding out of the stairway that students and parents use to access Overmiller Rd from The Auburn Greens. An updated stairway with ramp would remove hazards and allow bikers, scooters, and families with strollers to get to the sidewalk without obstacles.
2	Education St	Reconstruct sidewalks. Potential utility pole relocation	The sidewalk on Education St is heavily trafficked by the students walking to school from the Auburn Greens. Widening and extending the sidewalk would improve the aesthetic value of the street as well as improve the safety of the students and families that use the current sidewalk to get to school.
3	Professional Dr/Bell Rd	Install ramps, truncated domes for ADA compliance	The installation of concrete detectable warning pavers are essential at pedestrian crossings to warn people with visual impairments of the potential hazards when entering the street.

4	Professional Dr/Bell Rd	Construct sidewalk/ramp from the dirt lot to the school on private property that would be reimbursed once developed	A walkway would allow students and parents to walk from the dirt lot to the school in a safe manner as the dirt trail is currently heavily trafficked. The current dirt trail is steep and can be problematic after rain, etc.
ID	Location	Recommendations	Justifications
6	Professional Dr	Improve transit bus stop	Currently there is no bus shelter at the bus stop. A bus shelter would allow visibility and easy access to the bus and add comfort and convenience for bus riders.
7	Corner Education St/Hwy 49	Create paved parking lot on southwest field owned by school	The walk audit highlighted the need for 'Drop and Walk' locations. A planning meeting was held to identify locations within a ¼ to ½ mile from Rock Creek Elementary where parents can safely park and walk part way with their child to school or for a drop off location for older students that can walk (or bike) independently. The members concluded that there are currently no locations around the school which had a direct and safe path for children to walk to school. Paving the field would allow parents to park and either drop off students or accompany them to walk to school. Students could walk directly to school using the sidewalk on Education St and entering the back gates of the school. The walkway will need to comply with ADA standards.